



Flathead National Forest

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Flathead National Forest Strengthens Uphill Ski Policy

KALISPELL, MONT. – In an effort to continue access to public lands, maintain a long practiced traditional activity and provide for public safety, the Flathead National Forest is implementing strengthened regulations supporting the uphill ski traffic policy at Whitefish Mountain Resort.

In 2010 Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR), Flathead National Forest (FNF) and the public worked together to establish an uphill traffic policy and a Special Order to maintain skier access, reduce risk to uphill and downhill skiers and minimize disruption to WMR employees and operations. In recent years a small minority of uphill users failed to follow the policy, putting themselves and others at risk.

The problem was highlighted last season when two skiers, after being directed to stay on an approved route, ventured into an area where resort employees were doing avalanche mitigation using explosives. The non-compliant skiers could have been injured by an explosion or buried by the subsequent release of snow.

This year any uphill travelers not following the special order (using approved routes, at approved times, approaching closer than 100 feet of grooming equipment or 50 feet of snowmaking equipment) can be ticketed and face up to a \$100 fine for a first offense and potentially stiffer penalties for repeat offenders.

The special order, including specific times and routes, can be found on the Forest's website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/flathead/recreation/wintersports>.

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